



General  
Services  
Administration  
Information Security  
Oversight  
Office

Washington, DC 20405

DD/A Registry  
83-0878

March 28, 1983

DD/A REGISTRY  
FILE: 70-7

Mr. Harry E. Fitzwater  
Deputy Director for Administration  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Fitzwater:

In drafting Executive Order 12356, "National Security Information," its authors concluded that they should not perpetuate the fiction of automatic declassification based solely upon a fixed period of years, a feature of prior information security systems that was honored far more frequently in the breach than in practice. Therefore, Section 1.4 of the Order provides: "When it can be determined, a specific date or event for declassification shall be set by the original classification authority at the time the information is originally classified." Section 1.5 of the Order provides that the original classification authority shall mark information "Originating Agency's Determination Required," abbreviated "OADR," when the classifier cannot determine the period of national security sensitivity. In other words, original classifiers are first required to consider the applicability of a particular date or event for declassification. Only when he or she is unable to determine such a date or event is information to be marked, "OADR."

Unfortunately, initial reviews and inspections conducted by the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) have revealed what appears to be an undesirable tendency on the part of some original classifiers to ignore the consideration and assignment of a declassification date or event. Instead, they appear to be practicing the rote application of the "OADR" marking. ISOO analysts have discovered a number of instances in which information was marked "OADR" although it was time sensitive and clearly could be declassified after a specified period of time or upon the occurrence of a specific event. Continuing disregard of this requirement will increase the amount of information that remains classified unnecessarily, especially if the information is the subject of derivative classification action.

I am sending this letter to the senior program official of every agency that creates and/or handles national security information. I request that you bring this matter to the attention of all classifiers in your program as quickly as possible and include specific coverage of this topic in your security education and training programs. With respect to those agencies that do not have original classification authority, their security managers and derivative classifiers should be trained to question the original classifier about markings that appear to deviate from the requirements of the Order and its implementing directives and regulations.

83-0878

2

Executive agencies have greeted E.O. 12356's realistic approach to automatic declassification with much enthusiasm. They should not jeopardize this provision by failing to adhere to its requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Steven Garfinkel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

STEVEN GARFINKEL  
Director